Railroads

Railroad Quick Facts

- Approximately 113,750 freight trains move through Indiana every year.
- 40 railroads operate within the state.
- Railroads operate approximately 4,200 miles of track statewide.
- Each day approximately 32,000 rail carloads of freight are moved over rail lines.
- One rail carload carries the equivalent of two and a half semi-trailer loads.
- Railroads provide annual economic benefits to shippers of approximately $2.1 billion in cost savings.
- Primary commodities moved by rail through Indiana include coal, grain, steel, manufactured products, plastics and chemicals.
- There are approximately 6,500 public rail-highway crossing intersections.
- More than 1,000 Hoosiers are employed at the Amtrak maintenance facility in Beech Grove.

Indiana Railroad Programs

Passive Grade Crossing Program

Since 1997, more than $2 million in state funds have been made available to local units of government and railroads operating in or through Indiana to provide improvements at passive rail-highway intersections. These are crossings without automatic (train activated) types of warning devices.

Thirty-six Indiana counties have benefited from the program, which funded more than 2,000 passive grade crossing improvements. A few improvement types eligible for reimbursement include advance warning signs, pavement markings and sight obstruction removal.

Industrial Rail Service Fund

The INDOT Rail Section has provided loans and grants to numerous Class III railroads and municipal port authorities (city or county operated railroads) over the past 20 years. The funds help the railroads purchase or rehabilitate railroad tracks. The fund has also been used to assist with the Lafayette Railroad Relocation Project. This project has eliminated 42 grade crossings in Lafayette. The chart below shows the loans and grants provided over the last three years.

Total Funding Provided

Fiscal Year	Number of loans and grants*	Total Amount
1998	1 loan/4 grants	$1,665,125.00
1999	3 loans/26 grants	$6,142,963.13
2000	3 grants	$913,308.00
Total	4 loans/33 grants	$8,721,396.13

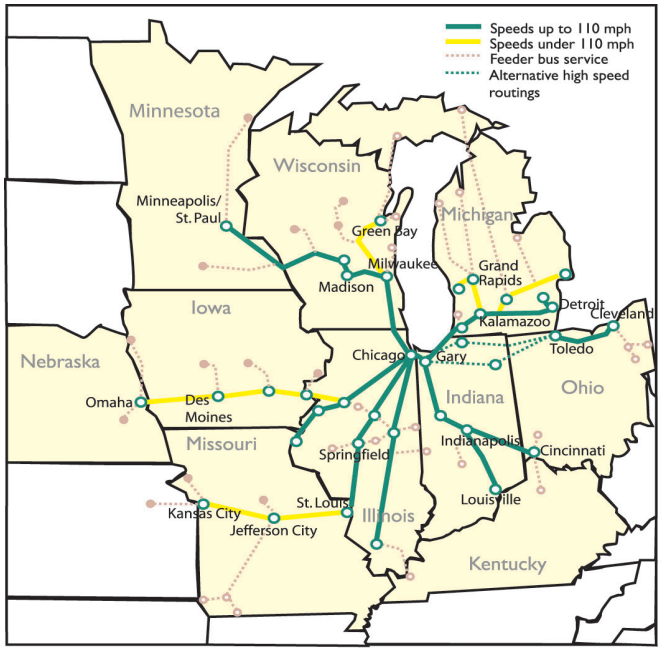
** Provided to Class III railroads, port authorities and cities*

Future High Speed Passenger Rail

The Rail Section has been actively involved in the planning and analysis of potential future higher speed passenger rail services throughout Indiana. Analysis is being conducted, in coordination with eight other midwest states, to determine the most cost-effective technology and routing to be used to connect major midwest cities via high-speed passenger trains. Along with its ongoing planning activities, INDOT recently completed a series of public outreach meetings around the state to discuss plans and receive input from the public. Improved rail travel is being considered for its efficiency in serving travelers between major cities located 150 miles to 400 miles apart.

The service being considered would carry travelers at speeds up to 110 mph with frequent departures, a comfortable ride, and reliable service at prices competitive with discount airline fares.

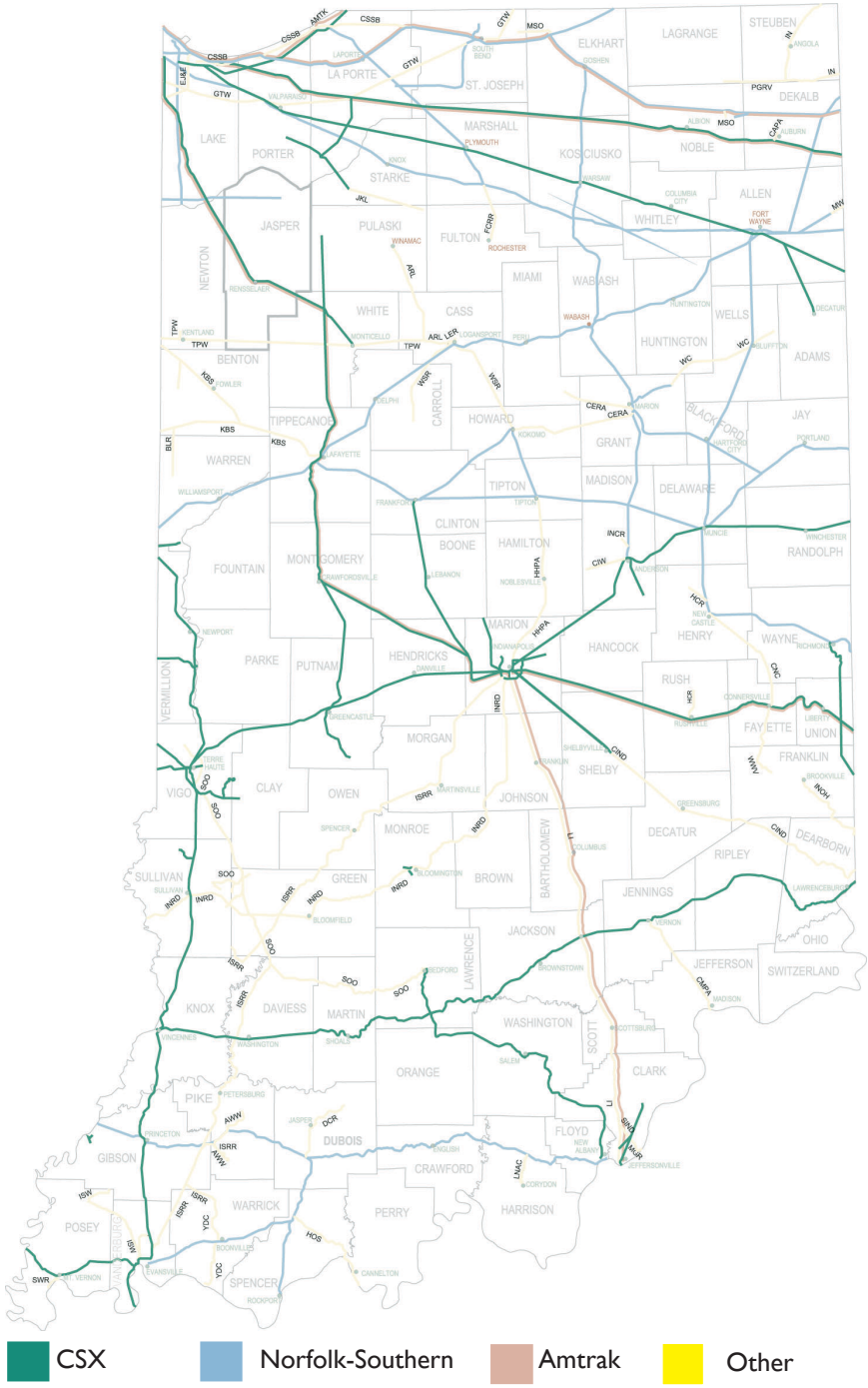
Midwest Regional Passenger Rail System



Indiana Railroads, Classes, Mileage and Abbreviations (as of 12/01)

CLASS I RAILROADS	Mainline Track Miles	Abbreviation for map
Amtrak	18	AMTK
CSX Transportation	1,840	CSX
Grand Trunk-CN	81	GTW
Norfolk Southern Corporation	1,385	NS
CP-SOO Line Railroad	94	SOO
Class I Subtotal	**3,418**	
CLASS II RAILROADS		
Chicago, South Shore & South Bend	86	CSSB
Elgin, Joliet & Eastern	35	EJE
Indiana Harbor Belt	46	
Class II Subtotal	**167**	
CLASS III RAILROADS		
Algers, Winslow & Western Railway Co.	16	AWW
A & R Line	27	ARL
Auburn, Indiana Port Authority	1	CEPA
Beeline Railroad	10	BLR
C & NC Railroad	22	CNC
Central Indiana & Western Railroad Co.	9	CIW
Central Railroad Company of Indiana	71	CIND
Central Railroad of Indianapolis	81	CERA
Elkhart & Western Railroad	16	
Fulton County Railroad	15	FCRR
Honey Creek Railroad	14	HCR
Hoosier Southern Railroad	22	HOS
Indian Creek Railroad Company	5	INCR
Indiana & Ohio Railroad, Inc.	19	INOH
Indiana Northeastern Railroad	43	IN
Indiana Rail Road Company	120	INRD
Indiana Southern Railway Co.	170	ISRR
Indiana Southwestern Railway Co.	18	ISW
J.K. Line, Inc.	16	JKL
Kankakee Beaverville & Southern	62	KBS
Kendallville Terminal Railroad	2	
Logansport & Eel River Short Line Co, Inc.	2	LER
Louisville & Indiana Railroad Co.	107	LI
Louisville, New Albany & Corydon Railroad	8	LNAC
Maumee & Western Railroad	3	MW
MG Rail, Inc.	8	MGR
Madison Railroad, Div. of City Port Authority	26	
Pigeon River Railroad Company	9	PGRV
Southern Indiana Railroad Company	8	SIND
Southwind Railroad	6	SWR
Toledo, Peoria & Western Railway Corp.	55	TW
Wabash Central Railroad	25	WC
Whitewater Valley Railroad	19	WWV
Winimac Southern Railroad	56	WSR
Class III Subtotal	**1,101**	
Total System Mileage	**4,686**	

Indiana Rail Lines



Railroads

A CSX line running through Indianapolis.

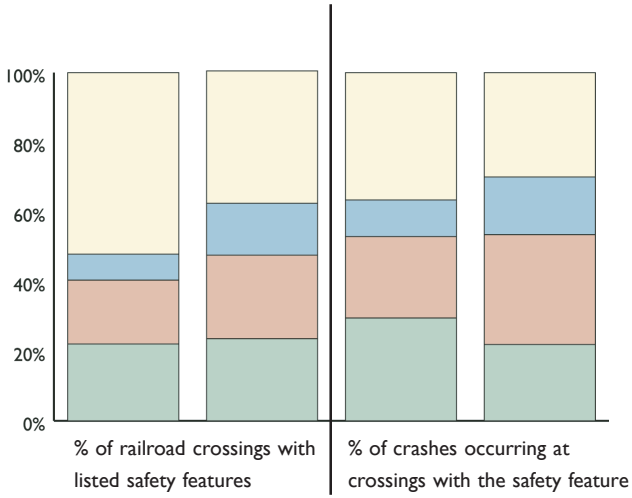
Indiana Railroad

Ten years ago INDOT's budget for rail crossing signal projects was about $5 million per year, which was enough for about 40 crossings per year with half of those on the state highway system. That budget now is about $15 million per year, which is enough for about 100 crossings per year and nearly all on local roads because most state highway crossings already have lights or gates.

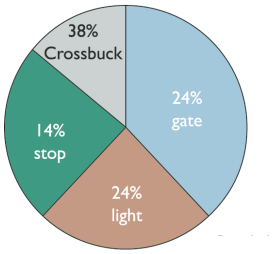
While the number of accidents has generally been declining for over 20 years, Indiana ranks fifth in the nation for total crossings and generally ranks between 2nd and 4th for number of accidents. Sadly, more than half those crashes are at crossings that have flashing lights or gates. Warning devices are only effective if drivers obey them. While Indiana ranks high in crossing accidents, keep in mind that with somewhat less than 200 crashes and about 25 fatalities per year, rail crossings are actually a very small part of the overall highway crashes and fatalities each year.

In addition to the $15 million on signal projects, INDOT also provides about $500,000 per year to local agencies and railroads to assist them with replacing or updating crossbucks, stop signs, advance warning signs, pavement markings and other minor improvements at rail crossings.

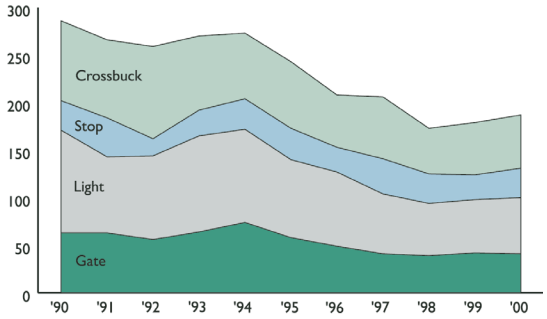
Of 6,433 railroad crossings in Indiana, there are 38 percent with crossbucks, 24 percent are gated, 24 percent have lights and 14 percent have stop signs. The pie graph (right) shows what percent of accidents occurred when the listed safety features were present. There were a total of 187 accidents in 2000.



Year 2000 accidents at railroad crossings



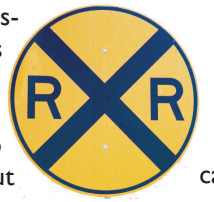
Year 2000 accidents occurring when safety features are present



Indiana crash trends

Warning systems in use

Advance Warning Sign



This sign warns that there is a rail crossing ahead. Motorists must obey the signs at the crossing and be prepared to take action as needed. Common warning devices at crossings include crossbucks, stop signs and flashing lights with or without gates.

Crossbuck Sign

When this is the only sign at a rail crossing, motorists must yield to any approaching train and cannot proceed through the crossing unless it is safe to do so. Motorists must be prepared to slow down or stop if necessary to be sure that no trains are approaching. Failure to yield is a traffic violation.

Stop Sign—with or without a crossbuck

Motorists must always stop, look for and yield to any approaching trains and cannot proceed until it is safe to do so. Failure to stop is a traffic violation.

Flashing Lights

Motorists must stop when the lights are flashing, and may not proceed unless it is safe to do so. Failure to stop for flashing lights is a traffic violation.

Gates with Flashing Lights

Motorists must stop when the lights are flashing and the gate is down, and may not proceed until the gate is back up and the lights are off. Driving around a lowered gate is a traffic violation unless directed to do so by a police officer or railroad official.

Other things to consider

The average train weighs about 12 million pounds. To put things in perspective, the ratio of that train to an average automobile is about 4,000 to 1—the same ratio of that automobile to an aluminum can. When the average automobile runs over it, the can will be crushed. A similar result can be expected when an automobile puts itself in a train's path. An average 100-car train traveling at 50 mph can take one mile to stop.

According to the Indiana State Police, the majority of collisions between trains and motor vehicles involve trains traveling at 35 mph or less. In about 25 percent of all grade crossing accidents, the car hits the train, which is already passing through the crossing. Nearly two-thirds of all crossing accidents occur during daylight hours. Because two-thirds of all accidents occur at crossings equipped with automatic warning devices, driver inattention is clearly the major cause.

Many warning devices at grade crossings are installed under the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987. The federal program to assist in funding grade crossing improvements began in 1978, under a different title. In enacting that legislation, Congress recognized the public responsibility for highway improvements - which also includes installation and upgrading of highway warning devices at rail crossings. For this reason, the federal government provides 80 percent of the financing for these projects, with the remaining 20 percent paid by state or local highway authorities.

An example of a gate with flashing

Safety tips

- Watch for warning signs and signals. The round, black-on-yellow warning sign is usually posted 750 feet before a crossing. The pavement may be marked with an "RXR" and a white line to indicate where motorists should stop. If there is more than one track, a sign below the crossbuck indicates the number of tracks at the crossing.
- Don't get boxed in on a crossing.
- Never drive onto a crossing until you are sure you can clear the tracks. Never drive around gates or past flashing lights.
- Watch out for a second train. Do not proceed over multiple track crossings until you are sure that no other train is coming on another track, especially from the opposite direction.
- Get out of your vehicle if it stalls on the tracks. If a train is coming stay clear. If no train is in sight, post lookouts and try to start the vehicle or push it off the tracks.
- Watch for vehicles that must stop at railroad crossings. Trucks carrying hazardous materials and buses are required to stop at all crossings.
- Be extra alert at night or in bad weather.